

## Remarks

### Amendments to the Claims

Claims 4-6, which are subject to a restriction requirement, are cancelled from this application. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application containing claims to the invention recited in the cancelled claims.

Independent claims 1 and 7 have been amended to more clearly state the invention. In each of these method claims the aluminum alloy vehicle body structure comprises external door panels, a hood panel, fender panels, a trunk-lid panel, and a roof panel. Paragraphs 0003-0007, 0011, and 0014, for example, describe the application of the subject methods to make substantially all-aluminum automotive vehicle bodies. Such bodies enclose the engine compartment, passenger compartment, and trunk compartment of the automobile and include at least the above specified external body panels. In accordance with this invention such body structures are suitably moved through a series of large treatment tanks (e.g., 6800 cubic feet for eight motor vehicle bodies, see paragraph 0018) so that all external visible surfaces are anodized and colored alike for uniform decorative effect (0005). This is preferred over an assembly of individually colored panels whose colors do not match.

Dependent claims 2, 3, 8, and 9 are amended to conform to the language of their respective independent claims.

These amendments do not raise any new prosecution issues, they simply better define the vehicle body structure which is made, anodized, and colored per the original claims.

It is believed that claims 1-3 and 7-10 clearly recite embodiments of an invention for decorative aluminum vehicle bodies that is not taught or suggested by the prior art.

### The Claim Rejections

Claims 1 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartkowski et al (5,102,508) in view of Hill et al (6,493,920) and Leclercq (3,733,766). Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartkowski et al, in view of Hill et al and Leclercq as applied to claims 1 and 7-10 above, and further in view of Gruninger (4,648,911). Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartkowski et al in view of Hill et al and Leclercq as applied to claims 1 and 7-10 above, and further in view

of Gruninger and Lowenheim. It is respectfully requested that each of these rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn for the following reasons.

#### Reasons for Allowance of Claims 1-3 and 7-10

The experience and history of automotive vehicle manufacture for over a century has been to fabricate vehicle bodies of frames and panels that usually enclose an engine compartment, a passenger compartment, and trunk compartment. The exposed surfaces of such a body structure are provided with suitable undercoating for corrosion resistance and paint adherence. The visible surfaces are then painted. The efforts of the industry in decorative vehicle body manufacture has been largely to develop better paints and painting systems for the exterior surfaces of cars and trucks.

In some prior art vehicle bodies, anodized trim strips for window framing and the like have been applied as add-on parts to the previously assembled and painted body. But to applicants' knowledge no one has conceived of attaching a set of aluminum alloy panels to make the body structure, and then anodizing and coloring the anodized surfaces of the panels to provide the aluminum alloy structure with a uniform decorative appearance. This is the practice recited in claims 1-3 and 7-10. Thus, the claims recite an entirely different concept of making a body structure from the attachment of individual anodized and colored trim strips or individual panels to a previously made and painted vehicle body.

Claims 1 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartowski et al (5,102,508) in view of Hill et al (6,493,920) and Leclercq (3,733,766).

The Bartowski et al '508 patent (Bartowski) discloses a method of producing colored anodized surfaces on individual aluminum alloy add-on parts. The parts are described as being useful in the hardware industry or the lighting industry or in automotive manufacture. In the case of vehicle manufacture, the parts are add-on ornamental parts such as door edge guards, or window frames or mounting systems. Bartowski is simply talking about a better anodizing process for more durable, small anodized and colored, decorative aluminum parts for any industry. Bartowski does not teach or suggest a new method of making an automotive vehicle body of aluminum alloy members.

The Hill et al '920 patent describes a method of assembling a vehicle 10 comprising a cab module 12 and a greenhouse roof assembly 14. The cab module 12 comprises panel members 20 such as door members, hood members, front and rear panel members. He suggests

that the cab module members be made of stamped steel or molded plastic (column 2). But these cab module members include the vehicle body panels that claims 1-3 and 7-10 require to be made of aluminum alloys and attached as a body structure for anodizing and coloring. Hill et al don't disclose the concept of making a vehicle body structure with aluminum alloy panels as recited in applicants' claims. Hill's roof assembly 50 can include members made of aluminum parts. But the Hill roof assembly is made separately and attached to cab module 12 made of steel or plastic in accordance with the prior art. The separate, add-on roof assembly, even if made of colored, anodized aluminum, is not a vehicle body structure as recited in claims 1-3 and 7-10. Hill does not teach or suggest applicants' claimed methods.

The Leclercq '766 patent pertains to profiled architectural panels for building surfaces. The panels are intended to provide decorative add-on cover panels for large building surfaces. But the Leclercq disclosure has nothing to do with making automobile body structures.


The combination of the Bartowski, Hill, and Leclercq disclosures actually teach away from applicants' invention as recited in claims 1, and 7-10. Each of these disclosures describes practices for producing an add-on part for some other structure. The add-on part may be an anodized and colored aluminum alloy part. But the part is separately formed and then added to some existing structure such as a lighting fixture, a building, or a vehicle body. There is no combination of these three patents that teaches or suggests the methods recited in claims 1 and 7-10. It is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 2 and 3 are, respectively, rejected being unpatentable over Bartowski et al in view of Hill et al and Leclercq as applied to claims 1 and 7-10 above, and further in view of Gruninger, or in view of Gruninger and Lowenheim. Claims 2 and 3, respectively, add a cold sealing or hot sealing step to the method of independent claim 1. These sealing steps are important to the quality of the vehicle body structure as produced by the method of claim 1. However, applicants do not assert that the sealing steps standing alone are novel. But the method of claim 1 is patentable over the combination of these several references for the reasons stated above with respect to the combination of Bartowski et al, Hill et al, and Leclercq. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that these rejections of claims 2 and 3 be withdrawn.

The prior art does not show making a vehicle body structure in accordance with claims 1-3 and 7-10. It is requested that these claims be allowed and this case passed to issue.

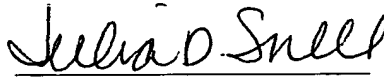
The prior art does not show making a vehicle body structure in accordance with claims 1-3 and 7-10. It is requested that these claims be allowed and this case passed to issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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